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INDIANA UNIVERSITY

Department of Zoology

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BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA 47401

January 24, 1978

TEL. NO. 812-337-7522

Dr. Joshua Lederberg
Department of Genetics
Stanford University
School of Medicine
Stanford, California 94305

Dear Josh,

Congratulations and best wishes on your new appointment! Of all American universities, Rockefeller is certainly the best for you to preside over. Presumably you can concentrate on intellectual leadership without too much distraction by problems of finding financial support for the institution per se. We'll all be watching and rooting for your success.

Now that you will be moving, you will doubtless be faced with the problem of disposing of papers, letters, books, etc. I'm interested in this because Perkins gave me the job of chairing a committee of the Genetics Society on the preservation of historical documents. One of my first actions was to try to find out whether you had arranged to preserve your many invaluable materials. I learned that you had given some information to Edsall's Survey of Sources on the History of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology and that you had promised to give your documents to the Library of the American Philosophical Society. That's just what I hoped, so I did not write to jog your memory.


But this move of yours is not only important for you, but critical for the preservation of your materials. Let me urge you therefore to send now what you would otherwise throw away. I know that Whit Bell, Librarian of the Philosophical Society would gladly pay for the packing and sending of material. I enclose a list of the kinds of items particularly wanted. I may add that he is also anxious to get copies of all editions of all genetic books that were used widely in classes or that were important surveys of the state of genetic knowledge at the time. I sent him a list of my old books that I was about to throw away and found that he wanted most of them.

I know you will be very busy (and probably irritated) with the task of moving and disposing of some things, but I beg you not to let your annoyance result in the irretrievable loss of documentation of your tremendous career and its importance in the history of genetics.

I assume that all materials you accumulate at Rockefeller will almost automatically get eventually into the recently created Rockefeller Archives. For historical purposes, it is most important to attend now to the preservation of your pre-Rockefeller material. So drop me a line reassuring me that you will be careful about this and send your materials to the Philosophical Society which already has a fine start with its collection of genetic materials and means to concentrate on genetics still further.

With best regards to you and Marguerite from Ruth and me,

As ever,


T. M. Sonneborn

TMS:nla
Enc.